



BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS

Directive: 14 – 101

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to provide policy and procedures regarding blood-borne pathogens.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of DGS-MCP to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees, and visitors to DGS-MCP secured facilities. Officers will adhere to the policies and procedures set forth in this Directive when responding to calls for service involving potential blood-borne pathogens.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome – A communicable disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).
- B. Biohazard – A material of biological composition, especially if infective in nature, that constitutes a threat to human beings and their environment.
- C. Blood-borne pathogens – Microorganisms that are present in blood and can cause disease in humans. These include, but are not limited to, Hepatitis (HBV) and HIV.
- D. Airborne pathogens – Microorganisms that are present in the air and cause disease in humans. Such diseases include, but are not limited to, tuberculosis.
- E. Body fluids – Fluids that have been recognized by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as directly linked to the transmissions of HIV and/or HBV and/or to which universal precautions apply include, but are not limited to, the following: blood, semen, blood products, vaginal secretions, and saliva. Saliva is included because it is often impossible to determine if blood is present in the saliva at the time of exposure. Since exposures that occur in law enforcement environments are very often uncontrollable circumstances, it is recommended that all body fluids be treated as though they have the potential to transmit blood-borne diseases.
- F. OSHA – The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is the federal agency responsible for regulating workplace safety. OSHA has established standards for infectious disease control.
- G. Mucous membrane – Areas inside the eyes, ears, nose, mouth and vaginal areas.
- H. Universal Precautions – Treating all blood and body fluids as if they were contaminated.
- I. Non-intact skin – Includes skin with dermatitis, hangnails, cuts, abrasions, chafing, acne, etc.
OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1030(b)
- J. Decontamination – The use of physical or chemical means to remove, inactivate, or destroy blood-borne pathogens on a surface or item to the point where they are no longer capable of transmitting infectious particles and the surface or item is rendered safe for handling, use, or disposal.
- K. Personal Protective Equipment – Specialized clothing and equipment worn or used by an employee for protection against a hazard. Examples include eye protection, masks, gowns, gloves, etc.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Exposure Defined

1. An exposure to infectious diseases is considered to have occurred in the following circumstances:
 - a. The employee's eye, mouth or other mucous membrane comes into contact with blood or body fluids;
 - b. The employee has an open wound or other non-intact skin where blood or other body fluid contact occurs;
 - c. Intact skin contact with large amounts of blood or body fluids for a prolonged period of time;
 - d. The employee has a prolonged exposure to the exhaled air of an individual with active Tuberculosis Disease (TB), or an individual believed to have active TB. *OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1030(b) / Health-General article, Annotated Code, State of Maryland §18-213(a)*
2. Animal Exposures – Rabies
 - a. Exposure to rabies may occur by an animal breaking the skin, scratching, or licking an open wound or mucous membrane.
 - b. Animal exposures will be documented and, in the event of an animal bite, the required animal bite report will be submitted and all appropriate notifications will be made.
3. Any one of the above situations constitutes an exposure. Any employee who has reason to believe that he or she has been exposed to any communicable disease must report the incident.
4. All members of the Department will observe universal precautions.

B. Prevention Techniques & Procedures

1. Vaccination – All employees are encouraged to get vaccinated against hepatitis B, tetanus, and any other vaccinations that the employee's health care provider feels is necessary and prudent to protect the employee.
2. Personal Protective Equipment
 - a. All members are encouraged to use the protective equipment that is available whenever feasible to do so when encountering a person that may pose a danger of exposure to the officer of a communicable disease.
 1. At a minimum, eye and face protection should be used whenever splashes or spray of blood/body fluids are reasonably anticipated.
 2. CPR masks with one-way valves should be used when performing mouth to mouth breathing.
 - b. Members will use the appropriate protective equipment when handling any biohazards; from needles, to soiled disposable gloves, and will dispose of them in a manner that protects employees, the public, and the environment from the biohazard.
3. Needles and other sharp instruments pose a particularly high risk as means of occupational exposure. The following procedures must be followed to reduce this potential risk:
 - a. Needles or sharps will not be bent, recapped, sheared or broken.
 - b. Needles recovered during the course of duty will be sealed in the disposable syringe container issued for that specific purpose. Always hold the sharps container by the closed end.

- c. Once placed in the disposable syringe container, the needle will be taken to the station, where the container and syringe will be stored properly and safely.
- d. Other sharps, such as razors and fragments of glass, must be handled with extreme care and placed in a sharps container at the earliest opportunity.

4. Workplace Conduct

- a. Employees will wash their hands and any other skin with soap and water, or flush mucous membranes with water immediately or as soon as feasible following contact of such body areas with blood or other potentially infectious materials, or if there is a chance that such contact was made. If soap and water is not readily available, employees will use an alcohol-based hand cleaner and hand wipes immediately and then wash with soap and water as soon as possible.
- b. Every reasonable effort should be made to minimize exposure to body fluids. Members should cover all open wounds with a band-aid or other protective dressing prior to reporting for work.
- c. Employees will wash their hands immediately upon removal of gloves or other personal protective equipment.
- d. Eating, drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, and handling contact lenses are prohibited in work areas where there is a reasonable likelihood of occupational exposure.
- e. Employees are prohibited from keeping food and drink in refrigerators, freezers, shelves, cabinets or on counter tops where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present.
- f. Items contaminated with blood or bodily fluids will be placed in the appropriate biohazard container at the earliest possible time. Contaminated items may not be transported from the Department for disposal, decontamination, etc., unless they are labeled as biohazards and packaged appropriately.

5. Prisoner Concerns

- a. Prisoners with body fluids on their person shall be transported in separate vehicles from other arrestees and maintained in separate holding areas.
- b. Prisoners with a known communicable disease will be isolated from other prisoners.
- c. If custody of the prisoner is relinquished to another agency, the arresting officer shall notify the receiving agency that the prisoner has a communicable disease. This notification will be documented, including the name of the person that was advised, in the incident report.

6. Gloves

- a. Disposable protective gloves will always be worn when:
 - 1. Cleaning up blood, saliva, semen, urine, feces or other secretions, which have contaminated floors, seats or equipment; and
 - 2. Handling items which may contain contaminated blood or body fluid products such as hypodermic needles or syringes.
- b. Disposable protective gloves may be worn when searching people who have been arrested. Officers may also elect to wear other gloves that are lined with a protective material when searching prisoners.
- c. Disposable gloves will not be re-used.

7. Contamination Management

- a. All equipment and surfaces must be cleaned and decontaminated immediately after contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials. Decontamination will then be accomplished through the use of biohazard disinfectant solutions.
- b. Employee clothing that becomes contaminated with blood or body fluids will be handled in one of the following manners:
 1. If the clothing is contaminated with a very small amount of blood or body fluid, the employee should change clothes prior to leaving the station. The contaminated area must be treated with alcohol, peroxide, or some other product issued for that purpose. The item can then be cleaned in the normal manner.
 2. If the amount of blood or body fluid on clothing is large, the employee will change clothes at the station, and place the contaminated clothing in a plastic bag with a biohazard label affixed. The bag will then be stored safely and securely in the designated container.

8. Decontamination of Vehicles

1. If the amount of blood or body fluids is minimal, the vehicle may be cleaned using a cleaning product designed for that purpose. The area should then be decontaminated with a bleach solution containing one part bleach to nine parts water.
2. If the vehicle is contaminated with a large quantity of blood or body fluid, decontamination will be done by professionals trained and qualified to do so. Personnel will not occupy the vehicle until decontamination has been completed.

9. Issued property and equipment

- a. All members are responsible for properly cleaning and decontaminating issued property and equipment after contact with blood or fluids which may contain blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- b. Special attention will be given to:
 1. Any property or equipment that is used repeatedly, or comes into contact with multiple individuals; and
 2. Property or equipment that comes into contact with swollen or broken skin. Examples include handcuffs, leg irons, and other similar prisoner restraints. After cleaning, these pieces of equipment should be decontaminated with alcohol.

C. Managing Exposure

1. When exposed to a possible communicable disease, blood-borne pathogen or the victim of a human bite incident:
 - a. Immediately encourage the wound to bleed by applying pressure around the wound causing fluids to drain away from the wound.
 - b. Wash the area with soap and hot water, and swab the affected area with alcohol.
 - c. Never decontaminate your skin with full strength bleach or a bleach solution as it may cause severe injury.
 - d. If practical, respond to the nearest hospital for medical treatment. It is critical to seek medical attention as soon as possible, since prophylactic medications are most effective when initiated promptly after exposure.

- e. Notify the supervisor as soon as practical.
- 2. All follow-up visits should be kept to insure the well being of the employee.

D. Right To HIV Testing

1. “Prohibited exposure” means a crime or delinquent act that may have caused or resulted in exposure to HIV. *Criminal Procedure article, §11-107(e)*
2. As used in sections 11-109 through 11-113 of the Criminal Procedure article, “victim” includes a law enforcement officer who is exposed to HIV while acting in the performance of duty.
3. As used in sections 11-109 of the Criminal Procedure article, body fluids means:
 - a. Any fluid containing visible blood, semen, or vaginal secretions; or
 - b. Cerebrospinal fluid, synovial, or amniotic fluid.
 - c. Body fluid does not include saliva, stool, nasal secretions, sputum, tears, urine, or vomitus. (It is understood that the CDC definition differs in that it includes saliva.)
4. Occurrence of exposure – Exposure to HIV between a victim and a person charged with a prohibited exposure occurs:
 - a. By percutaneous or mucocutaneous contact with blood or body fluids;
 - b. By contact for a prolonged period with blood or body fluids of an open wound,
 - c. By intact skin contact for a prolonged period with large amounts of blood or body fluids; or
 - d. Under any other condition or circumstance under which a person may be exposed to HIV. *Criminal Procedure article, §11-109*
5. HIV testing of charged person – The court may order a person charged with a prohibited exposure to give a blood sample to be tested for the presence of HIV if:
 - a. The person is charged with a prohibited exposure within 1 year after the prohibited exposure occurred;
 - b. A victim or victim’s representative request the testing in writing to the State’s Attorney in the county where the prohibited exposure occurred.
 - c. Prior to ordering the accused to provide the blood sample, the court will hold a hearing to determine if probable cause exists to justify the order.
6. HIV testing after conviction, probation before judgment, or adjudication
If the victim or victim’s representative makes a written request for testing to the State’s Attorney in the county where the prohibited exposure occurred, the court will order that testing be done and a blood sample be given by:
 - a. A person who has been convicted of a crime that includes a prohibited exposure;
 - b. A person who has been granted probation before judgment in a case involving a prohibited exposure; or
 - c. A child respondent who has been found to have committed a delinquent act that includes a prohibited exposure.
7. Notification
 - a. After conducting the testing, the local health officer or his designee will notify the person that gave the blood sample and the victim of the test results.
 - b. If the results are positive, the local health officer will provide the two parties with appropriate counseling if so desired.